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GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS

In the intellectual sphere it will be found that most of the great names of the Victorian Age are those of men and women born in the ten years between 1809 and 1819. Carlyle, Macaulay, Disraeli, J. S. Mill, are all a little earlier, and Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, Millais, George Meredith a little later. But the calendar of those ten years is worth recounting:

In 1809 Darwin, Gladstone, Tennyson.

1811 Thackeray.

1812 Dickens, Robert Browning.

1816 Charlotte Bronte.

1819 (the birth year of Queen Victoria herself), George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, Ruskin.

I have included Disraeli and Gladstone not because, but in spite of their being politicians.

At the queen's accession the eldest of these was twenty-eight and the youngest eighteen. That year (1837)—the opening scene of the Victorian drama—fitly heralded the future; for in it were given to the English world two immortal works, opposite as the poles in character, but each disclosing for the first time the real genius of its author: Dickens' "Pickwick Papers" and Carlyle's "French Revolution." During the decade which followed our literature was enriched by "Vanity Fair," "Jane Eyre," the first volume of "Modern Painters," and the first two volumes of Macaulay's "History of England."

Sir Edward Clarke has recently produced an interesting autobiography. . . I will not go through his catalogue, but every one should read and study it; but I will take two or three years as samples, sometimes omitting one or two of Sir E. Clarke's specimens, and sometimes adding one or two, for which he has not found a place.

Take first 1850—the year of "Pendennis," "In Memoriam," and "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." Or again, 1855, with "Maud," "Men and Women," "The Virginians," Macaulay's third and fourth volumes, and Herbert Spencer's "Psychology." Or, lastly, 1859, with the "Idylls of the King," "Adam Bede," "The Tale of Two Cities," "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," Edward Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat," and (in some ways the most epoch making of them all) Darwin's "Origin of Species." Even this marvelous and almost unexampled array gives an inadequate idea of the resources of Victorian genius when the age was at its zenith. For, within the same ten years, we have the first published poems of Matthew Arnold and William Morris, Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," the first novel of Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford," Mill's "Liberty," and the best work of Charles Kingsley. . . The

stream, if never afterward quite so full and strong, did not dry up; it was for years later being constantly re-enforced and vitalized by new tributaries, down to the very confines of the Victorian Age.

The wind blows where it lists; and no theory of causation with which I am acquainted—whether of heredity, or environment, or of any combination or permutation of possible or imaginable antecedents—can adequately account for these indisputable facts. It is right, moreover to record, that the Victorian public, the men in the street at whom Matthew Arnold gibed, the subscribers to the circulating libraries, which then went far to make or unmake the fortunes of an author, were neither unappreciative, nor exclusive in their appreciations. It is true that the two greatest of the women writers of the age—Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot—were, at the outset of their careers, roughly handled by the orthodox and fashionable critics. But both came very soon into their own. In the case of another pair of the most gifted authors of the time, Robert Browning and George Meredith, each of whom had to wait before he could make good his claims to pass, from the worship of a coterie, into the recognized Pantheon, the fault lay perhaps as much with the perversity of the public.—From Mr. Asquith's Romanes lecture, "Some Aspects of the Victorian Age."

THE WAY OF LOVE

With what wild clamor I besieged
Love's door—

Pled for his pity, begged his sympathy

Besought him of his trust to make me free;

And pledged him all the joy within my store,

And all the blossoms that my garden bore,

And all my songs and all my loyalty—

Alas! Love, my love, only laughed in mockery,

And bade me to be gone forevermore.

Wounded and sad, I crept away to hide,

Where I might never meet his scornful eyes;

Then, stealing soft to win my swift surprise,

And all my fears with happy wit deride—

Love sought me out, his eyes with longing dim,

And led me back to make my home with him.

—Charlotte Becker.

WHAT'S THE INFERENCE?

Mrs. Flatbush—"Is your husband a good golfer?"

Mrs. Bensonhurst—"Well, he doesn't swear, if that's what you mean."—Yonker's Statesman.

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